

Message Text

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SUBJ: ADMIRAL AZEVEDO COMMENTS ON NATO

REF: (A) LISBON 2798; (B) LONDON FBIS 262355Z MAY 75

SUMMARY: PORTUGAL'S NAVY CHIEF HAS COMMENTED POSITIVELY, BOTH
IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATELY, UPON NATO. END SUMMARY.

1. GOP NAVAL CHIEF OF STAFF AND REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER
ADMIRAL PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS TO JOURNALISTS
UPON RETURN FROM NATO CONFERENCES IN BELGIUM:

A. NATO IS A DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION: (COMMENTING ON
RESOLUTION OF QUESTION SPAIN/NATO TIES) "I WAS CONVINCED
THAT HIGH LEVEL DECISIONS WERE INFLUENCED BY AMERICA, BUT
IN REALITY THEY ARE NOT. WHEN THE QUESTION IS ONE OF
MAJOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY, THE ALLIANCE FUNCTIONS

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DEMOCRATICALLY AND THE OPINION OF A SMALL COUNTRY COUNTS

FOR AS MUCH AS THAT OF AMERICA. THE U.S. ACCEPTED A DEMOCRATIC GAME, FOUGHT LIKE ANY GOOD PLAYER, WAS DEFEATED, AND ACCEPTED THE DEFEAT. THIS IS AN AFFIRMATION THAT I AM PLEASED TO MAKE PUBLICLY, IN ORDER THAT THERE BE NO DOUBT ABOUT DOMINATION OF THE ALLIANCE BY AMERICA."

B. ALLIANCE WITH SOUTH AFRICA: A MISUNDERSTANDING -- JOURNALIST WHO REPORTED THIS MISUNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS MERELY CONJECTURE OF ONE DELEGATE CONCERNING POSSIBLE FUTURE FACILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA TO DEFEND OIL ROUTE.

C. SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO: THERE ARE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES FOR PORTUGAL IN SUCH MEMBERSHIP. RIGHT NOW IT IS NOT IN PORTUGAL'S INTEREST FOR SPAIN TO JOIN. BUT CONDITIONS MAY CHANGE, AND FACT THAT PORTUGAL AND SPAIN GEOGRAPHICALLY ARE ON SAME PENINSULA LEADS ME TO CONCLUDE THAT IT COULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS. HOWEVER, IT IS FOR ALL MEMBERS, NOT JUST PORTUGAL TO DECIDE. DURING THE VOTE, PORTUGAL'S TURN WAS LAST. I LIMITED MYSELF TO SAYING I AGREED WITH MAJORITY. FORTUNATELY NO ONE QUESTIONED ME, AS I WOULD HAVE BEEN AT LOSS AS HOW TO RESPOND.

D. PORTUGUESE MEMBERSHIP IN NATO: NO ONE EVER BROACHED QUESTION OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN GOP. THAT THIS PRESENTS PROBLEMS IS A FACT, ESPECIALLY, FOR EXAMPLE, REGARDING ATOMIC MATTERS. WE RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH PROBLEMS EXIST. IN ANY CASE IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE THAT NATO IS CONCERNED, SINCE PROBLEM PREVIOUSLY AROSE IN CASE OF ICELAND.

E. NATO/WARSAW PACT EQUILIBRIUM: IS NOW UNBALANCED IN FAVOR OF WARSAW PACT. "(CIVILIAN LEADERS) DO NOT ALWAYS BELIEVE IN THIS CONCLUSION OF MILITARY ONES, BUT DISAGREE-ABLE AS THIS MAY BE FOR NATO. . . THE ANALYSIS IS BASED ON FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS WHICH, IN MY OPINION, ARE ACCURATE." CIVILIANS WILL BE UNHAPPY WITH THIS CONCLUSION BECAUSE IT IMPLIES NEED TO ASSUME GREATER FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS. THIS IS HARD TO DO UNDER PRESENT ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT NECESSARY IN ORDER TO RESTORE BALANCE BETWEEN TWO DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATIONS.

2. COMMENT: AZEVEDO HAS REPUTATION OF BEING "PROGRESSIVE," AND IS GENERALLY HELD TO BE STRAIGHT TALKER. EXPRESSO EDITOR PINTO BALSEMAO, WHO WAS DELEGATE TO NATO MEETING AND RODE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BACK IN SAME PLANE AS AZEVEDO, ALSO REPORTED AZEVEDO'S APPARENTLY GENUINE SURPRISE AT THE DEMOCRATIC NATURE OF NATO PROCEDURES AND THE FACT THAT NATO WAS NOT, AS THE LEFT HERE CHARGES, A TOOL OF US INTERESTS.

3. AZEVEDO'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMENTS ARE ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE UTILITY OF GETTING THE RELATIVELY UNTRAVELLED AND UNSOPHISTICATED AFM LEADERS OUT OF PORTUGAL AND EXPOSED

TO THE REAL WORLD.
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